

Build a Custom Cabinet Part 1

How to Plan and Build a Custom Cabinet Part 1

Building a custom cabinet can be intimidating for someone who is new to DIY and woodworking. I know that when I first started, I didn't build anything unless I had a plan and spent a ton of time studying it, literally!

I like to sew and have a large rack that holds all of my spools of embroidery thread. The rack was mounted to the side of my sewing cabinet so that the thread was in easy reach. I recently built a brand new sewing cabinet and did not want to mount the rack to it but I didn't want it to be exposed for my guests to look at, either (my sewing area is currently in the dining room)! I figured I would design and build a cabinet to serve more than one purpose... Not only will it conceal all of that thread, but it will also serve as a chalk message board!

Today, I'll share my tutorial on how to plan and build a custom cabinet part 1. The basic planning, cutting, and assembling will be included in Part 1, and finishing, hardware, and chalkboard (or mirror) will be included in Part 2.



HOW TO PLAN AND BUILD A CUSTOM CABINET {PART ONE}

DESIGNS BY
STUDIO C

My plan for my cabinet will be that it will be shallow (only as deep as the deepest point of the rack with thread), narrow, and tall plus it will have a chalkboard as the door panel.

Materials:

- Measurements of the cabinet to be created – Make sure

you add a little bit of wiggle room just in case! The rack measures 26" tall by 15-1/2" wide by 3-1/2" deep. I'm going to build my cabinet to measure 29" tall by 17" wide by 4-1/2" deep including the door.

- Something for the panel in the door frame – A mirror can be used, a 1/4" wood panel, or a chalkboard like I am going to use. Home Depot carries these chalkboard panels in 2' x 4' sheets.
- Plywood and matching edge banding – Plywood is one of the most economical building choices. I'm using 1/2" oak [Purebond](#) plywood with matching edge banding. Edge banding is not necessary if the exposed edges are the desired look or a painted finish will be used. I do like to leave the edges bare especially if I'm using chalk paint!
- Glue and screws or nails to hold the box together – There are many ways this cabinet can be fastened together. Regular nails or screws from the outside can be used, as well as the Kreg jig pocket hole system, or even a brad nailer. I plan on using the Kreg jig with 1" pocket hole screws and a brad nailer to fasten the back to the cabinet frame and the chalkboard to the door.
- Finishing supplies – I like to thoroughly sand all of my pieces before assembly using 80 grit, then 120 grit, and finishing with 220 grit. The cabinet will be hung in the dining room adjacent to the kitchen, and I will finish the cabinet using [RustOleum's](#) Ultimate Wood Stain in Black Cherry with three coats of RustOleum's Ultimate Polyurethane in Soft Touch Matte. Your cabinet can be finished however you wish!

Start by cutting the pieces. I cut strips from my plywood on the table saw at 4" wide. A circular saw or jigsaw can also be used. I applied the edge banding then trimmed it. I then used my miter saw to cut my pieces to length – I cut two pieces

measuring 17" long for the top and bottom, then two pieces measuring 28" for the sides.



I set my Kreg jig for 1/2" material and drilled pocket holes in each end of the sides. I attached the sides to the top and bottom using glue and the 1" screws.





I then measured the box to cut a piece for the back of the cabinet and cut the piece on my table saw. I attached the back

to the inside of the frame using glue and 1-1/4" brad nails.





For the door, I wanted the rails (the horizontal pieces) and stiles (the vertical pieces) to measure 2" wide. I cut the

strips on my table saw, then cut the pieces to length on my table saw. The rails measure 13" long (the width of the cabinet minus the width of the material) and the stiles measure 29" long. I applied edge banding to the long edges of each piece, as well as the shorter edges of the 29" pieces. I drilled pocket holes in each end of the rails and assembled the door using glue and 1" screws.



This tutorial is easy and applies to any size cabinet or thickness of plywood. Stay tuned for Part 2 where the cabinet will be finished, and the rack, hardware, and chalkboard will be installed!

If you need any help with how to plan and build a custom cabinet part 1, shoot me an email at [designsbystudioc \[at\] gmail \[dot\] com](mailto:designsbystudioc@gmail.com)!

(Part 2 can be found [here](#))